

What is claimed is:

1. In an information distribution system, apparatus comprising:
 - a storage unit, for storing a plurality of programs, each program
 - 5 being associated with a relatively high bitrate information stream and a corresponding relatively low bitrate information stream;
 - a server, for retrieving one or more of said programs from said storage unit, said storage unit selectively multiplexing, for each retrieved program, a respective one of said relatively high bitrate information
 - 10 stream and said corresponding relatively low bitrate information stream to form a multiplexed information stream; and
 - a communications link having a finite bandwidth, for transporting said multiplexed information stream; wherein
 - said server preferentially multiplexing said relatively high bitrate
 - 15 information stream associated with each of said retrieved programs;
 - said server, in response to a condition of insufficient communication link bandwidth, multiplexing said respective relatively low bitrate information stream associated with one or more of said retrieved programs.